

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ for seismic exploration of a submerged sub-surface (32) including:

A plurality of bases located at predetermined seabed positions, each base comprising an elongate stem penetrating the seabed, at least a seismic sensor within said stem, a radially extending support zone connected to the upper end of the stem, said upper end projecting from the seabed, and a respective plurality of modules each incorporating a data storage unit and a power source, each module being mechanically and electrically connected to the upper end of said stem, said module being capable of being connected to, and disconnected from, the base by an underwater vehicle.

~~a number of bases (4) each incorporating at least one sensor (10, 12); and~~

~~a module (6) associated with each base and incorporating data storage media (29), characterized in that it incorporates facilities which can be dismantled again for fitting the module onto the base.~~

Claim 2 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the ~~module (6) is fitted onto the base~~ includes a mooring element for an underwater vehicle by means of a sliding motion then by a rotation about an axis (40) parallel to the direction of the sliding motion.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 2, in which the module is fitted onto the base by means of a sliding motion then by a rotation about an axis parallel to the direction of the sliding motion. ~~either of the preceding claims, in which it is provided with facilities (30) to bring the module (6) to the base (4) and facilities (30) to carry out the fitting of the module onto the base.~~

Claim 4 (currently amended) A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 3, in which the support zone presents orifices extending in a direction not perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the stem. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which provision is made for submerged facilities (60) for storage of one or more modules (6) dismantled from their bases.~~

Claim 5 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the upper end of the base comprises a housing for receiving the module. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which the base includes a stem and a support zone (52) extending radially in projection from the stem in order to prevent a portion of the base situated above the support zone from penetrating the ground.~~

Claim 6 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 5, comprising means for sealing the housing in the absence of a module. ~~the preceding claim, in which the support zone (52) presents a smooth lower face (53).~~

Claim 7 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, ~~either of Claims 5 or 6~~, in which the support zone (52) presents an acoustic signature enabling identification thereof by a sonar carried by an underwater vehicle. ~~orifices extending in a direction not perpendicular to a longitudinal direction (40) of the stem.~~

Claim 8 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the module has a density roughly equal to 1. ~~any one of Claims 5 to 7, in which the support zone (52) presents an upper face (56) widening out towards a lower face of the support zone.~~

Claim 9 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the module includes a clock. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which the base presents a housing (18) for the module and facilities (62) to seal the housing in the absence of the module.~~

Claim 10 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the module includes means for transmitting and/or receiving of an acoustic signal. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which the base (4) includes a mooring element (60) for a vehicle (30).~~

Claim 11 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the stem of the base has a height ranging between 1 and 40 metres. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which provision is made for facilities (30) for carrying out the dismantling of the module (6) on the base (4) and facilities (30) for transporting the module away from the base.~~

Claim 12 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, in which the module is connected to the base by a contactless coupling. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which the module (6) has a density roughly equal to 1.~~

Claim 13 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 12, ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the module (6) is coupled to the base by a magnetic link. ~~includes a source of electrical power (25).~~

Claim 14 (currently amended): A system ~~System~~ according to Claim 1, comprising additional bases connected to at least one of said bases by cable. ~~any one of the preceding claims, in which the module (6) includes a clock (27).~~

Claim 15 (currently amended): A method of seismic exploration of a submerged sub-surface, comprising the steps of lowering near a predetermined seabed position, a base having an elongate stem and at least a seismic sensor within said stem, a radially extending support zone being connected to the upper end of the stem, anchoring the stem to the seabed while keeping its upper end projecting from the seabed, connecting a module including data storage means and a power source to the upper end of the stem by means of an underwater vehicle, repeating the steps above for each seabed position at which seismic data must be acquired, and disconnecting said modules from the respective bases after completion of the seismic acquisition by means of an underwater vehicle. ~~System according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the module (6) includes means for transmitting and/or receiving of an acoustic signal.~~

Claim 16 (currently amended): ~~System~~ A method according to Claim 15, anyone of the preceding claims, in which the base is anchored to the seabed by free fall towards the seabed. (4) ~~includes at least one geophone (10).~~

Claim 17 (currently amended): ~~System~~ A method according to Claim 15, the preceding claim, in which the base is anchored to the seabed by driving said stem onto the seabed. (4) ~~includes an acoustic decoupler (16) between the geophone (10) and a zone (18) of the base suitable for receiving the module (6).~~

Claims 18-35 (canceled).

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